CHAPTER VII
SAHODHARAN AYYAPPAN AS AN ADMINISTRATOR

After the inception of the Cochin Legislative Council, Sahodharan Ayyappan turned his attention towards politics mainly to use the Legislative Council for protecting the interests of the backward classes. M.K. Raman and Padinjakkara Munda Vaidyan were contested from the two special constituencies reserved for Ezhavas. Sahodharan Ayyappan decided to contest from the Anthikkad constituency (General) in response to the request of the Ezhavas of the locality. He also wanted to use this opportunity to test the attitude of other communities towards his reformist activities. Here, his opponent was Chelur Itti Ravi Nambudiri, a landlord. Major communities in the Anthikkad constituency were Ezhavas, Nairs and Christians. Ezhavas of this constituency made substantial advancement in education, wealth and progressive outlook in comparison to other regions. In numerical strength and influence, Christians had the upper hand. Most of the Christians were pattam tenants and Ezhavas land owners.

During the election campaign Sahodharan Ayyappan never mentioned anything about his opponent. He tried to enlighten the people about the merits of democracy. He openly stated that Government of the people, by the people and for the people would cure all the political ills of the day. Democracy always protected individual liberty. Under it, all are equal before the eyes of law. Then he also promised to protect the interests of the verumpattam tenants. These tenants had no permanent right over the property and were subjected to eviction and reduced to the status of mere slaves. Sahodharan Ayyappan promised to argue for the cause of these tenants in the legislature and stood for their permanency rights and freedom. As most of the Christians were tenants, he expected their support against the land lord. But at the climax of the election campaign, there occurred an
incident which considerably affected the result. From time immemorial, the Ezhavas and Christians of Anthikkad used to call each other by name. This was not liked by the Christians and preferred to be called as ‘Mappilas’. On this point, a highly influential and wealthy Christian by name Kodam Kandathu Lona approached Sahodharan Ayyappan and promised all help from his community if Sahodharan Ayyappan persuaded his community to stop the practice of calling them by name. As far as Sahodharan Ayyappan was concerned, this was not justifiable because when Christians called Ezhavas by name they reciprocated the same. He added that after his entry in legislature he would try his level best to put an end to this kind of casteism. This reply earned the animosity of Lona and he made vigorous propaganda against Sahodharan Ayyappan which pushed majority of the Christians to the opposite side. Certain earlier activities of Sahodharan Ayyappan like the Sahodhara Movement and propaganda against casteism and superstition had already earned the antipathy of the orthodox Hindus. All these forces worked together and defeated Sahodharan Ayyappan in the first Legislative Council election. From the special constituencies reserved for Ezhavas M.K.Raman and Munda Vaidyan were elected. Even though Sahodharan Ayyappan faced defeat in the council election of 1925, he appeared in the Legislative Council as correspondent of the Sahodharan paper.

In the second Legislative Council election (1928), Sahodharan Ayyappan submitted his nomination from the South Ezhava constituency. He published and circulated a pamphlet among the people which requested to cast votes in favour of him. In this request he assured the people that after his entry in legislature he would try his level best to promote the welfare of the people. This time he was elected to the Cochin Legislative Council. After this, Sahodharan Ayyappan got continuously elected to the Cochin Legislative Council until the integration of Travancore–Cochin on 1 July, 1949.
In the maiden speech itself, Sahodharan Ayyappan criticized many a policy of the Cochin Government. He argued that the Heads of Departments should have imagination, new ideas and willingness to introduce new reforms. He opined that the responsible officers of the state should have responsibility to the people. Such a responsible rule does not exist in the State. Criticizing the budget he remarked that the Government did not either lessen any burdensome tax or increase income by way of taxation without affecting the common people. In order to present a surplus budget, the Government tried to lessen expenditure and increase income. Government should have utilized money for the welfare of the people and must not have stored it. In this respect, Sahodharan Ayyappan blamed the Cochin Government that they had no such intentions.

In the maiden speech itself, Sahodharan Ayyappan criticised the Government policy towards the Pulayas, the community to which he was indebted for the honour “Pulayan Sahodharan Ayyappan”. He said, “What our Government did to the people? And are now doing? For instance, take the case of the Pulayas. What were the measures undertook by the Government for the betterment of the Pulayas? A new department for the uplift of the depressed classes had been established. But this year, an amount of Rs.55,000/- had been allotted to the Department even though the state had a total income of Rs.77 lakhs. My request is that the Government should remove all obstacles in their way to deal freely with all communities and thereby provide a chance to grow with other people. Then they will develop power to earn money. So, the Government should persuade the Maharaja to make a declaration stating that these depressed classes have equality in all civic rights with other people. Such a Proclamation will arouse the personality of Depressed Classes and release the hidden powers in them. This will help to create great men from that community. For this, all officers of the state should sincerely try to uplift these people. Such a state of affairs will increase the popularity of our Government in the eyes of other State Governments. These
statements may be interpreted as communal; but it is good to bear in mind that where communalism is strong, there the demand to protect the weaker sections arise”.7

Sahodharan Ayyappan invited the attention of the Government to the fact that people in general had no technical knowledge and experience in industrial activities. So, Sahodharan Ayyappan urged the Government that they should take the initiative to start industries and run by expert advice and shows the people that it was profitable. He also criticized the existing system of question answer method in the Legislative Council. Sahodharan Ayyappan demanded that the Government authorities should give clear answers to the questions.8

Sahodharan Ayyappan in the first speech itself sympathized with the low paid Government servants of the State. He said, “So far the problem of low paid Government servants of the State did not receive proper attention. Here, efforts were going on to increase the salary of the highly paid government servants. In which way one can live by Rs.9. By this small salary, Government indirectly persuaded the employee to accept bribe and theft. Is the Cochin Government proud of it? In our state a low paid government employee who receive rupees nine had to look after a family-wife, children and others. For lessening the sufferings of these poorest sections, the Government and the legislative Council members should co-operate to make legislation to the effect that no employee receives the salary less than Rs.15.9

The Cochin Thiyya Act

Even though Sahodharan Ayyappan was an out and out reformist, he wanted to start the same from his own community-Ezhava. Further, he was elected to the Cochin Legislative Council from the South Ezhava Constituency. Moreover, the teachings of Sree Narayana Guru, the saint turned social reformer of Kerala, had created a stir among the Ezhavas. Hence, Sahodharan Ayyappan decided to start his work from there.
On 19 February 1930, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced the Cochin Thiyya Bill in the Legislative Council which was seconded by C.J.Mathew. The main aim of this Bill was to bring the Thiyyas of Cochin-Kanayannur taluk who followed Marumakkathayam or matrilineal system of inheritance under the system by which sons and daughters were given equal shares of the parents’ properties. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of M.K.Raman, V.D.Ouseph, K.P.Kannan Nair, C.J.Mathew, K. Mohammed Seethi, A.B.Salem, P.C. Chanchan, Mrs. G.Pavithran, A.Sankara Menon and Sahodharan Ayyappan.10 Rao Bahadur T.S.Narayana Ayyar, Diwan of Cochin and President of the Council nominated A.Sankara Menon, the Law Member, as Chairman of the Committee.11 In the Select Committee Report, there were no amendments.12 It was passed by the Legislative Council and on 29th July 1932 got the assent of the Maharaja.13 This Act penalized bigamy and provided for inter-marriage with other classes. Moreover, the Marumakkathayam seemed to be gradually tending towards Makkathayam or patrilineal system of succession.

The Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act

Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced the Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Bill in the Legislative Council on 15 February 1933, which was seconded by Joseph Pettah. This Bill was intended to regulate the law of marriage and succession among the Makkathayam Thiyyas of Cochin. Excepting the chapter on succession and a few additions to definitions in Chapter I, this was almost similar to the Cochin Thiyya Bill assented to by the Maharaja.14 It was referred to a select committee consisting of Sahodharan Ayyappan, P.S. Kesavan Nambudiri, C.A. Ouseph, M.K.Raman and K. Achyuta Menon.15 The President of the Legislative Council Rao Sahib T.V.Kasturi Ranga Ayyar, Diwan of Cochin, nominated K. Achyuta Menon, the Government Advocate, as the Chairman of the committee.
The Select Committee recorded evidence from various centres and it was seen that 8,902 people had recorded their opinions. Some of them were examined by the committee and others had sent in their opinions. Out of these, 5125 persons including 1621 women had expressed their opinions in favour of the Bill, while the number that opposed came to 3777 including 419 women. The whole of Cranganore was in favour of the Bill whereas the whole of the Chittur taluk opposed it. After a detailed study, the select committee members decided to recommend: (a) The daughter should be given one third of the share of a son in the intestate property of the father (b) Divorce should be effected through the courts on payment of compensation and polygamy should be made penal. (c) Father should have full rights to deal with the ancestral property. (d) Chittur is excluded from the purview of this Bill, reserving power, at the same time, for the Government, by a notification in the Gazette, to make the Bill or any portion of it applicable to that taluk or any part of it, whenever they deem fit to do so.

Sahodharan Ayyappan presented the Select Committee’s report in the Legislative Council on 29 November 1934. After discussion, the Bill as amended by the Council was passed on 25 January 1935. At the same time, there was a strong move against the Bill led by influential Ezhava leaders like C. Krishnan, editor of ‘Mitavadi’, a newspaper in Malayalam. There was also a complaint that only the supporters of the Bill were represented in the committee and there were nobody to represent the interests of those who opposed the measure and they had not the necessary opportunity to adduce evidence. So, when this Bill was passed by the Legislative Council, they waited on deputation and the Maharaja vetoed this measure.

By 1939, the attitude of the Ezhava community underwent change regarding the share of daughter in the father’s property. Hence V.K.Krishnankutty introduced a similar Makkathayam Thiyya Bill of Sahodharan Ayyappan in the Legislative Council on 7 February
1939. From the Government side C.A.Kunjunni Raja, the Advocate General, replied that as per information, the opinion was very much divided in the community and hence the Government opposed this Bill. However, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of C.A.Kunjunni Raja (Chairman), V.K. Krishnankutty, K.S.Panicker, K.R.Ramakrishnan, C.V. Iyyu, Mrs. Thankamma N.Menon and T.V.Subramania Ayyar. The Select Committee report was discussed and passed by the Council and got the assent of the Maharaja on 1 March, 1940.

**Cochin Civil Marriage Act**

Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced the Cochin Civil Marriage Bill in the Legislative Council on 24 February 1932 which was seconded by P.S.Kesavan Nambudiri. He remarked that this Bill was a necessity for individual liberty and greatness of the country. Sahodharan Ayyappan was pained to note that the people of Cochin had more loyalty and intimacy towards their caste than their nation. Only a change from this promotes national consciousness. For that, Sahodharan Ayyappan opined that the different communities should follow inter dining and inter marriage. This would strike at the very root of caste system which results in finding out solution to many problems of the day. After discussion, the motion was put and carried. Then the Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of K. Achyuta Menon (Government Advocate and Law Member-Chairman), Sahodharan Ayyappan, P.S. Kesavan Nambudiri, K.Mohammed Seethi, C.J.Mathew, P.Kumaran Ezhuthassan, T.A. Ramachandra Ayyar, Parakkil Krishna Menon and K.P.Vallon.

The Select Committee report presented by Sahodharan Ayyappan and seconded by P.S.Kesavan Nambudiri was discussed in the Council on 29th March 1933. P. Krishna Menon opposed it and demanded that the Bill be recommitted. His objection of the Bill was that there was no necessity for passing of this Regulation. Then the motion for the recommittal of the Bill was put to votes and carried.
Again on 25 January 1934, Sahodharan Ayyappan presented the Select Committee Report on the Civil Marriage Bill in the Council. It was seconded by P. Kumaran Ezuthassan. After discussion, the Bill, section by section, was passed.\textsuperscript{30} The Bill got the assent of the Maharaja on 29 June 1935 and became the Cochin Civil Marriage Act (XXI of 1110 M.E).\textsuperscript{31}

The Cochin Civil Marriage Act made a great reform in the realm of marriage. By this, age old customs were questioned and weakened. However, the greatness of this Act was that, without the consideration of caste and religion, lovers enjoyed complete freedom in respect of marriage. Further, it gave right to ancestral property for those persons who made intermarriages. Moreover, this Act served as a model and stimulus for other Indian states to pursue such progressive measures.

**The Cochin Caste and Religions Disabilities Removal Bill**

A Bill of this kind was first introduced in the Council by K.T.Mathew in 1928. However, it was not moved since the member was absent.\textsuperscript{32} In 1929, sanction was accorded to Sahodharan Ayyappan to introduce a similar Bill. When the Bill was taken up in the Council, Sahodharan Ayyappan, who was present, said that he did not move it.\textsuperscript{33} The next Bill was that of V.D.Ouseph. The motion that the Bill be read in Council was negatived by an overwhelming majority-the division being ayes-3, noes-23 (including 12 officials) and neutral-1.\textsuperscript{34}

The fourth Bill was that of Sahodharan Ayyappan again. In the course of discussion he made it clear that this Bill intended to give individuals complete freedom to choose their religious faiths.\textsuperscript{35} C.G.Herbert, Diwan of Cochin, recommended to the Maharaja that in the event of voting on this Bill, the Government might remain neutral and the Maharaja agreed to
it. The motion that the Bill be referred to a select committee was again lost, the division this time being-ayes 8, noes 13 and neutrals 15 (including Government members).

On 13 August 1932, Sahodharan Ayyappan moved in the Council that the Caste and Religious Disabilities Removal Bill be taken into consideration which was opposed by Dr.A.R. Menon. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan opined that only by relinquishing the differences in caste and creed, the people of a nation could achieve unity and progress. He continued that religions exist for mankind and not mankind exists for religions. However, Sahodharan Ayyappan was fully aware of the fact that in the event of voting, the Bill had to meet with failure and hence he sought the leave of the House to withdraw the Bill. But A.Sankara Poduval opposed it and the motion was negatived. Then again on the question of ‘Whether the Bill be taken up for consideration, voting took place and the motion was negatived.

Again the motion for introduction of the Bill was made by Sahodharan Ayyappan in the Council at its sitting on 28 March, 1936. To the Government, if the Bill passed into law, would very seriously affect the social structure of society and would also seriously affect the family system. A measure of this nature must come only when there was a great public demand especially from the Hindu section of the population, which would be most seriously affected by this measure. There were no such strong public support behind it and hence the Government decided to oppose the Bill. Finally, the principle of the Bill was not accepted by the Legislative Council and the motion lost.

These efforts of Sahodharan Ayyappan and others ultimately led to the introduction of the United State of Travancore –Cochin Removal of Civil Disabilities Bill in the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly by the then Chief Minister T.K.Narayana Pillai on 29 November 1949. During discussion, the principle embodied in the Bill was accepted by almost all members. Hence it was referred to a select committee consisting of Pattom

The Select Committee report was discussed and the Bill was finally passed by the Legislative Assembly. Hence, the Government of Travancore-Cochin passed the Travancore-Cochin Removal of Civil Disabilities Act (Act XX of 1950). It prevented the forfeiture of right of inheritance or of rights to property of a person who renounces or is excluded from the communion of any religion or is deprived of his caste.

For Family Planning

Sahodharan Ayyappan was a strong advocate of family planning. He introduced a resolution in the Council on 17 December 1931 urging the Government to institute birth control clinics in all the important hospitals of the state to give advise regarding birth control methods to those who were in legitimate need of it. He argued that family planning became a dire necessity due to economic backwardness and ill-health of the mother. Members like Mohammed Seethi, Joseph Pettah and C.A. Ouseph strongly opposed the resolution. During discussion C.A. Ouseph said, “In this matter Member for the South Ezhavas (Sahodharan Ayyappan) proved that he is a coward”. Sahodharan Ayyappan retorted that those who call him as a coward were real cowards in the sense that in undertaking or supporting this kind of reform, they had to face criticism from several quarters. Since the trend of the Council was not in favour of this resolution, Sahodharan Ayyappan did not press it.

Again on 22 January 1934, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a resolution in the council for this purpose. Now he demanded that the Government should take steps for giving advise for those who were interested in birth control, to avoid difficulties. From the Government side Dr. D. Raghavendra Rao, Chief Medical Officer, replied that the Government would be willing to ask the medical officers in charge of hospitals to give
necessary advice for those who needed assistance.\textsuperscript{49} On this assurance, Sahodharan Ayyappan withdrew the resolution, with leave of the Council.\textsuperscript{50}

At the same time, the birth control movement in India was older than elsewhere. The trends of the population growth have been a concern to the people of India. The first two birth control clinics anywhere in the world were established in Karnataka as far back as in 1930.\textsuperscript{51} The First Five Year Plan (1951-’56) recognized that rapidly growing population would jeopardize the programme of raising standard of living. Hence, family planning was adopted as an official programme in 1952. The aim was to reduce birth rate. The effort was to make people aware of the problem and provide devices and services for planning the family.\textsuperscript{52} Later, the Central Government financed the family planning programmes and left implementation to various state Governments. In this connection, the Government of Kerala also implemented this programme which materialized the efforts of Sahodharan Ayyappan in that direction.

\textbf{For Prohibition}

Sahodharan Ayyappan used the forum of legislature in his fight against drinking. Like Sree Narayana Guru, he also believed that for the progress of society, prohibition was indispensable. In pursuance of that policy, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a motion in the Council for showing that the Government had not taken any effective steps for prohibition, which was withdrawn.\textsuperscript{53} Again, on the motion of Mohammed Seethi for prohibition, Sahodharan Ayyappan argued that the Government should evolve a scheme with time limit for implementing prohibition.\textsuperscript{54} On 13 August 1932, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced another resolution in which he urged the Government that in view of the declared excise policy of prohibition, they might make it a rule not to serve liquors in any state entertainments. He added that this would serve as a good example to the people and if Government hesitated vice versa.\textsuperscript{55}
From the Government side V.K.Arvindaksha Menon, Commissioner of Excise, replied that in the matter of State entertainments, the Government had always been guided by the principle that the chief among the duties of a host was to give his guests an agreeable and a goodtime and to cater to their wants accordingly. The Excise Commissioner continued that many of the European guests would consider what would otherwise have been a brilliant banquet, a very tame affair indeed, if wines were not served. Hence, the Government opposed the resolution and later it was withdrawn.

On 15 February 1933, K.T.Mathew introduced a motion in the Council demanding the Government to reduce annually for the next five years 5% foreign, arrack and toddy shops in the state. Sahodharan Ayyappan supported this resolution and asked to M.P.Cherian, Commissioner of Excise, that whether the Government would reduce at least five shops that year. M.P.Cherian replied that it was the policy of the Government to reduce shops every year. Thereafter, K.T.Mathew withdrew his resolution, with leave of the House.

On 12 August 1947, T.K.Nair, Minister for Public Health, introduced the Cochin Prohibition Bill in the Council and declared that as a first step towards the introduction of total prohibition in the State, Government had decided to introduce prohibition in Chittur taluk from 1 October. It was finally passed in the Council on 13 August 1947. However, it was significant to note that when this piece of legislation was introduced from the Government side, Sahodharan Ayyappan was in the office of Minister for Public Works. The Cochin Prohibition Act was passed by the Maharaja of Cochin on 25 September 1947.

**Education for Poor**

Sahodharan Ayyappan always shared the feelings of common men and hence he strongly argued for the cause of their children. On 6 August 1929, he introduced a motion in the Council urging the Government to take steps for giving free education to all. Sahodharan
Ayyappan also warned that if wealthy people had monopolized the field of education, it would be detrimental to national interests.\textsuperscript{62} From the Government side Rao Sahib C. Mathai, Director of Public Instruction made it clear that education was for those who had the brains and those who had the means.\textsuperscript{63} This stand of the Government compelled the mover of the motion to withdraw.

On 17 December 1929, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a resolution in the Council for recommending to the Government to establish in every village of the state, for the benefit of the rural population, free Malayalam public libraries, attached to the premier school of the village. From the Government side Rao Sahib C.Mathai, Director of Public Instruction, replied that if the mover wanted only a gradual establishment of these libraries, the Government had no objection to accept the resolution.\textsuperscript{64} Accordingly, the resolution as amended by the addition of the word ‘gradually’ after the word ‘Government’ was accepted by the Government.\textsuperscript{65}

On 10 August 1932, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a cut motion during the voting of Demands for Grants for drawing the attention of the Government towards the difficulties of the poor students. He said that the expenses in connection with education had increased to such an extent that the poor could not afford.\textsuperscript{66} However, Sahodharan Ayyappan suggested that by substituting ‘slate’ in the place of paper for writing in primary classes and publishing text books by Government, the expenses could be lessened.\textsuperscript{67} Members like Joseph Pettah, A.Sankara Poduval, C.A.Ouseph etc. who took part in the discussion strongly supported this resolution. From the Government side I.N.Menon, Director of Public Instruction, replied that the Government had no objection towards the suggestion of Sahodharan Ayyappan and tried to lessen the expenses for primary education.\textsuperscript{68} Hence, Sahodharan Ayyappan did not press the motion and withdraw it.
Again on 8 August 1935, Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced another cut motion during the voting of Demands for Grants for requesting the Government to make all education free of fees for all subjects of the State. Sahodharan Ayyappan remarked that by this measure, the Government places the people in front of education. From the Government side I.N. Menon replied that however laudable the motive of this cut motion was and Government had absolutely no doubt that the motive itself was very laudable- it was not practicable from the point of finances. Finally, the motion was, with leave, withdrawn.

On 31 July 1936, Sahodharan Ayyappan moved a motion in the Legislative Council during voting of Demands for Grants to request the Government to make college education free for the poor among the backward classes. From the Government side Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetti, the Diwan President, gave directions to reserve two seats in each of the classes to which students of the depressed classes of approved merit and certified poverty would be admitted. As a result of this positive response from the Government side, Sahodharan Ayyappan did not press the motion and withdrew it.

**For Free Compulsory Primary Education**

As per Government statistics, 20% of the children of the school going age were not going to schools in Cochin by 1935. Most of these children belonged to poor families. They were forced to stay at homes mainly to look after their youngsters when their parents go for work. At the same time, some children even go for work for earning bread to their families. All these things were most unfortunate for the brighter future of the nation. Hence several progressive minded people argued in and outside the Cochin Legislative Council to put an end to this and introduce free and compulsory primary education. In this connection, Kumaran Ezhuthassan introduced the Cochin Free Compulsory Primary Education Bill in the Council on 27 March, 1936. From the Government side Rao Sahib I.N. Menon, Director of Public Instructions, replied that on the question of the desirability of universal primary education not as a solution of all difficulties either individual or national, but as the primary birth right of
every citizen, there was no cleavage of opinion between the mover of the Bill and the Government on the other side. He also advised to wait a little for free primary education.\textsuperscript{72}

Sahodharan Ayyappan strongly supported this Bill and opined that without compulsion, it was difficult to achieve universal education. He also said that it was shameful for a country to have a population of 20\% illiterate people. Sahodharan Ayyappan recalled that even in Europe exists compulsory education. Hence, it was necessary for Cochin also. He also argued that if the society has universal education then it was good for other people for a peaceful life. In other words, most of the anti-social elements were illiterate.\textsuperscript{73} Moreover, Sahodharan Ayyappan suggested that for meeting the expenses in connection with this reform, the Government could even impose an educational tax.\textsuperscript{74} Finally, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of Dr.I.N.Menon, the Director of Public Instruction (Chairman), Dr. A.R. Menon, K.M.Kunhi Moideen, P.J. Alexander, P. Govinda Menon, K.S.Panicker, Mrs. Meenakshi Menon, P.V.Subramania Ayyar and the mover.\textsuperscript{75}

P.Kumaran Ezhuthassan presented the Select Committee Report on the Cochin Free Compulsory Primary Education Bill in the Legislative Council on 21 January 1937. One of the important addition made by the Select Committee was that when the Bill became law every child in the area in which compulsion was introduced and every child belonging to the particular community would be compelled to send to school.\textsuperscript{76} According to the Bill, the school going age or the age of compulsion was fixed from 6 to 11. When this Bill became law, a child who was more than 6 years old and less than 11 would have to be send to school. The principle of the Bill was accepted in the first stage.\textsuperscript{77} In the second stage, there was discussion on the various provisions of the Bill. In the third stage, President of the Council Sir.R.K.Shanmukham Chetti, Diwan of Cochin observed: “Obviously I can not and the House itself cannot expect that the provisions of this Bill should be extended by one stroke of the pen to the whole state. It is admitted on all hands that certain localities or selected areas, for
various reasons selected, must first be chosen as compulsory areas. Another point is, if a policy of compulsion is launched upon in a particular area, the logical consequence of that would be to extend that policy in a reasonable time to the whole state. Further, we will have to consider what will be the incidence of that taxation, whether it will affect the rich or the poor. Finally, the motion that the third reading of the Cochin Free Compulsory Primary Education Bill be passed was put to votes and negatived. Therefore, the motion was lost.

On 11 August 1941, A.B. Salem introduced a resolution in the Council for recommending to the Government of Cochin that Free and Compulsory Primary Education be introduced in the state in such areas as require it in the discretion of the Government, and in the constituency of Mattancherri. It was strongly supported by Sahodharan Ayyappan. From the Government side Rao Sahib I.N. Menon, Director of Public Instruction, replied that the sinews of war did not permit the acceptance of the resolution, viz., Free and Compulsory Primary Education.

Finally, Kumaran Ezhuthassan introduced the Cochin Free Compulsory Primary Education Bill and was referred to a select committee which presented its report in the Council on 13 August, 1947. It was passed by the council and got the assent of the Maharaja on 12 March 1948.

In the cause of Tenants

The vast majority of tenants in the former Cochin State were either kanamdars or verumpattamdars. Till about the middle of the 19th century, they were in no way better than tenants at will. They were subjected to arbitrary eviction from their holdings at the hands of the Jenmis. The Government of Cochin thought it desirable to grant permanent rights to the tenants. So, the Maharaja of Cochin issued a royal writ (Theetoorum) in 1038 M.E. (1863 A.D) preventing eviction of kanam tenants before a period of twelve years. But this did not help the tenants much as they had to face eviction soon after the 12 years period.
lord – Tenant Commission of Cochin which submitted its report in 1908 recommended fixity of tenure for a section of the kanam tenants. On the basis of those recommendations, the Tenancy Act II of 1090 M.E. (1915 A.D) was enacted, granting fixity to those who took kanam holdings before 1885. This Act also made provision for the payment of compensation for improvements, fixation of renewal fees (kanam lease was renewable every 12 years), eviction of the kanam tenants on the expiry of the period of lease for bonafide purposes of the land lord etc.\(^{84}\) If the bonafides of the land lord were disproved the evicted tenant could opt to hold the land on the previous tenure. Sahodharan Ayyappan made strenuous efforts in the council for the betterment of tenants. During the general discussion of the budget on 30 July, 1929, he criticized the Government and charged that they did nothing for the distribution of lands widely among the people.\(^{85}\)

The Cochin Government decided to amend the Tenancy Regulation for effecting several changes. Hence from the Government side T.S.Narayana Ayyar, the Law Member, introduced a Bill in the Council on 2 December 1930. The Bill was referred to a select committee consisting of Sahodharan Ayyappan, K.T.Mathew, K. Mohammed Seethi, T.M. Krishna Menon, K. Kunjunni Nair, C.A.Kunjunni Raja, P. Raman Menon, Thomas Manjuran and T.S.Narayana Ayyar.\(^{86}\) The report of the Select Committee favoured tenants in general and recommended that the Government should bring a separate Bill for giving permanency rights to verumpattam tenants.\(^{87}\) K.T.Mathew, Sahodharan Ayyappan and K.M.Seethi Jointly signed a dissenting minute in the Select Committee Report. They were of opinion that instead of advising the Government to bring a new Bill, the Select Committee could give legal protection to verumpattam tenants for permanency rights in that Bill itself.\(^{88}\)

K. Achyuta Menon, the Government Advocate, presented the Select Committee Report on Cochin Tenancy Regulation Amendment Bill in the Council on 29 November 1932. During discussion K.T.Mathew made the following amendment – “When the improvement is not an improvement to which section 12\(^{89}\) applies and has caused an increase in the value of
the annual net produce of the holding, the Court shall determine, as nearly as may be, the average net money value of such increase and shall award as compensation for the improvement three-fourths of the amount arrived at by capitalizing such net money value at twenty times.

Explanation 1 – The value of the net produce means the amount remaining after deducting from the value of the gross produce, the cost of cultivation and the Government assessment and the local taxes.

Explanation 2 – In determining the net money value of the increase regard shall also be had to the condition of the improvement and probable duration of its effects and the labour and capital required for making such improvement.\textsuperscript{90}

This amendment was intended to protect the interests of \emph{verumpattam} tenants, particularly against eviction. Sahodharan Ayyappan happily supported this amendment and declared that the real owners of the land were not the jennies or \emph{kanam} tenants but the \emph{verumpattam} tenants who cultivated the land\textsuperscript{91} K.Achyuta Menon, the Government Advocate, opposed the Amendment.\textsuperscript{92} However, members in general, were convinced of the grave consequences indicating eviction of \emph{verumpattam} tenants, in the event of rejection of the Amendment. So the Amendment was carried. The amended Tenancy Regulation Amendment Bill was passed in the Council on 30 November 1932.

On 20 March 1934, E. Ikkanda Warriar introduced a motion in the Council for recommending the Government to give 25\% remission in the land tax in the next year. K. Sahodharan Ayyappan opposed it and opined that by this measure the jennies got more benefits and they would not reduce the rent due to them from the tenants.\textsuperscript{93} Hence, he argued that the Government should take steps for reducing the rent paid to the jennies by the tenants. Moreover, he said that if this demand was conceded, it would lessen the income of Government which adversely affects Government schemes for the betterment of people. However, the resolution was withdrawn, with leave of the House.\textsuperscript{94}
Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a resolution in the Council on 23 March, 1934, for recommending the Government to make legislation to reduce *pattons* to be paid by tenants to their landlords. From the Government side K. Achyuta Menon, the Diwan Peishkar, replied that there were many difficulties in the way of bringing legislation for the wholesale reduction of *patton*.* To ease the problem, Sahodharan Ayyappan suggested that the Government need not reduce the *patton* payable in kind and only to reduce *patton* in cash.* The Diwan Peishkar pointed out that a reduction in the money *patton* payable had to be accompanied by an increase in the cash *patton* payable in kind. However, Sahodharan Ayyappan did not press the resolution and withdrew it.*

Sahodharan Ayyappan introduced a motion in the council on 31 July 1936, requesting the Government to introduce a scheme of colonization of the unemployed in the *puduval* land in the interior parts who were prepared to cultivate the land.* He suggested that the Government should also advance loans for meeting the initial expenses and that amount along with the price for *puduval* land could be recovered in installments within a period of 20 years or more.* These suggestions attracted the attention of K. Achyuta Menon, the Diwan Peishkar, and assured that he would most sympathetically consider the applications and submit with recommendations for the very favourable consideration of the Government.* Thereupon, Sahodharan Ayyappan withdrew the motion.

On 27 March 1936, P.Kumaran Ezhuthassan introduced the Cochin Tenancy and Kudiyirippu Bill in the Council. From the Government side Thomas Manjuran, the Government advocate and Law officer, replied that the Bill was not acceptable on the ground that it would lead to evictions.* During discussion on this Bill Sahodharan Ayyappan agreed that permanency rights should be given to *verumpattom* tenants before *kanam* tenants because the former were the tenants who actually made improvements in the land.* He also urged the Government to take steps for reducing evictions and made it a rule that only on failure of
paytm payment, the jenmi could evict tenants. Then it was decided that the Bill would be circulated by the Government and those invited to offer their option would do so in six months. But the poor tenants could not record their opinions even though the bill was published in the Gazette. However, the Government concluded that the public did not want this piece of legislation. Under these circumstances, P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan made a move in the Legislative Council to refer the Bill to a select committee which was opposed by Thomas Manjuran, the Government Advocate and Law Officer. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan argued that the Bill be referred to a select committee. He also opined that even a good jenmi could not do fair treatment towards his tenant because both of them had conflicting interests. Finally, the motion was put to vote and negatived.

During the discussion on the resolution of K.M. Ibrahim, which urged the Council to recommend the Government to take action for the indebted peasantry, Sahodharan Ayyappan strongly argued for the cause of poor tenants. Sahodharan Ayyappan also demanded that the Government should take steps for the continuation of agricultural moratorium until new schemes to relieve the sufferings of agricultural debtors were launched. However, K. Achyutha Menon, the Diwan Peishkar, opposed the resolution. Finally, the resolution was put to votes and carried.

These speeches and efforts of members in and outside the council for the cause of indebted peasants had persuaded the Government to introduce the Cochin Agriculturists Relief Bill in the Council on 18th July, 1939. The object of this Bill was to afford some relief to indebted agriculturists. It was sought to be achieved by:

a. Scaling down of debt by wiping out all arrears of interest upto 1st Chingam 1107 M.E.,

b. Reducing the rate of interest from 1 Chingam 1107 M.E to 9% simple interest where the creditor was a public company and to 6% simple interest in other cases; and
c. Providing for the discharge of the entire arrears of *pattam or michavaram* on payment of 2 years *pattom* or 4 years *michavaram* over and above the current *pattam or michavaram*.\(^{114}\)

Sahodharan Ayyappan thanked the Government for bringing this legislation and opined that they should reform it to make that more beneficial to the debtors.\(^{115}\) Finally, the motion that the Cochin Agriculturists Relief Bill be passed into law was put and carried.\(^{116}\) It was passed by the Maharaja of Cochin on 11\(^{th}\) August 1939 which provided relief for indebted agriculturists of the Cochin State.

The Cochin Verumpattamdars Act was passed by the Maharaja of Cochin on 3 March 1943 to confer on certain terms and conditions and fixity of tenure to *verumpattam* tenants. It protected the interest of the tenants at will. The Act granted security of tenure to lessees and sub lessees in respect of their holdings. But in regard to homesteads, fixity of tenure was confined to non municipal areas only. According to one of the important amendments to this Act made in 1944, temporary lessees (*nadupattamdars*) who took lands on lease for specified periods, agreeing to repay arrears or rent or revenue due from the previous *verum pattom or kanam* tenant and to restore land back to the latter were excluded from the definition of *verumpattomdars*.\(^{117}\) Sahodharan Ayyappan moved the Cochin Verumpattamdar Act (Amendment) Bill in the Council on 18 January 1945. According to him, “no safeguard is provided in the Act against the unbearable increase and inequitable decrease of the money value of the pattom of coconut gardens owing to abnormal fluctuations of the coconut market. This Bill is to remedy the defect.”\(^{118}\) M.Sivarama Menon, Advocate General, replied that the Government had thought it better to have referred that Bill to the select committee and after considering the reports of the select committee if Government thought that there was a case for consideration, then Government would take into consideration all the pros and cons.\(^{119}\) Accordingly, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of Sahodharan Ayyappan,

The Select Committee Report was presented by Sahodharan Ayyappan in the Legislative Council on 21st March, 1945. One of the important principle was that during the boom period when there was an excess in the market value of coconuts owing to large fluctuations in the prices, the excess price over the contract rate be shared equally between the Jenmi and the tenant, and that during depression, the loss should be shared equally between the landlord and the tenant.\(^{120}\) The Cochin Verumpattamdars (Amendment) Bill was finally passed by the Council on 23 March, 1945 and later got assent from the Maharaja.\(^{121}\)

Even at the time of Ayyappan’s ministership in Cochin Government, he tried his level best to protect the interests of tenants. For instance, K. Kochukuttan, the nominated member from Vettuvas, introduced a resolution in the Council on 18 April 1947, for making legislation preventing landlords from evicting tenants from lands. Sahodharan Ayyappan, Minister for Public Works, replied that human beings needed dwelling houses and it was the duty of Government to provide protection to these tenants from eviction by land lords.\(^{122}\) He further declared that such legislation was under the consideration of Government. This reply satisfied the mover of the resolution and hence he withdrew it.\(^{123}\) Very soon, the Maharaja of Cochin promulgated a proclamation for prohibiting eviction.\(^{124}\) Later for protecting the interests of Kudikidappukar, the Travancore-Cochin Government passed the stay of Eviction Proceedings Act in 1950.

**As Deputy President**

There was a convention established by Sir.R.K.Shanmukham Chetty during the introduction of dyarchical system in the Cochin State that for the proper working of dyarchy in the State, the Deputy President should not be a member of the Ministerialist party. Just before the budget session, T.P. Paulose, Deputy President of the Council, resigned his office
on 9th July, 1940. Hence, it was decided to elect the Deputy President of the Council on 23 July, the beginning day of the Budget Session. A.L. Antony, Sahodharan Ayyappan, C.R. Iyyuni, M.K. Devassy and L.M. Pylee were nominated as candidates for election. But L.M. Pylee, A.L. Antony and M.K. Devassy had withdrawn and only two persons Sahodharan Ayyappan and C.R. Iyyuni - ultimately contested. C.R. Iyyuni was the representative of the Cochin Congress Party which was led by Dr. A.R. Menon, Minister for Rural Development. At the same time, Sahodharan Ayyappan belonged to the State Congress Party, which was in opposition. Hence in the election, Sahodharan Ayyappan was supported by official members and got 34 votes and C.R. Iyyuni, 22. Finally, Sahodharan Ayyappan was declared elected as Deputy President of the Council. In the next day, he made the following statement in the Council: “Whatever may be the views of distant onlookers about my outlook and activities, it is my belief that those who have had opportunities to work with me and know the real nature of the working of my mind, must not have failed to see that I have never subordinated public interests to any sectional or personal interest. I have now long been a participant witness of the slow but steady building up of the high traditions of this House, and I can not but be loyal and true to those traditions.”

That new office of power never prevented Sahodharan Ayyapan from arguing for tenants, responsible Government, temple entry, abolition of untouchability etc. He also supported Moothedan’s Cochin Christian Succession Act (Amendment) Bill, which was intended to give equal shares to sons and daughters. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan said; “In social legislation, I am of opinion-I am not going to the opinion that the Government should take- that legislators should go in advance of the state of the society. Otherwise, no beneficent legislation can be effected. A section, a large section, will always be against the beneficent change in social matters. They should be ignored. Countries which have made rapid advances in social matters have ignored this conservative majority and passed legislations for progress.
In 1118 M.E., the title of ‘Rao Sahib’ was conferred on Sahodharan Ayyappan by the British Emperor as a mark of Imperial Recognition. Earlier in 1111 M.E., the Cochin Maharaja had already honoured Sahodharan Ayyappan by the presentation of a ‘Vira Sringala’ in recognition of his services to the country in general and community in particular. Later, Sahodharan Ayyappan donated this ‘Vira Sringala’ to the war fund of the Government of India, constituted during the Chinese aggression of 1962. However, the acceptance of that honour from Government was ridiculed by many people. In that connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan wrote a letter to N. Raghavan, an old student, which runs as follows. “You know, I am not after any of these honours. They came unsought and had to be accepted not for personal but for political and communal reasons.

From the Cochin Census Report of 1941, we can trace enough proof for these claims of Sahodharan Ayyappan. For instance, “They (Ezhavas) are a very strong and well organized community. They have been given 20 percentages of the appointments under the Staff Selection Board rules. The socio-religious movement started by Sree Narayana Guru Swamikal, the spiritual leader of the Ezhavas, early in the century, gave great cohesion and strength to this community. The community owes much to its present leader Rao Sahib K. Ayyappan, the Deputy President of the Cochin Legislative Council, who has been making strenuous and sustained efforts for their social and political betterment.

On the 11 of February 1944, M. Krishna Menon introduced a resolution in the Council urging the Government to constitute a Public Service Commission in the place of Staff Selection Board. In that connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan argued for the continuation of Staff Selection Board. When the resolution was passed by the council, Sahodharan Ayyappan requested the Government to study the issue in detail before arriving at a decision. That request of Sahodharan Ayyappan was, to a large extent, responsible for dissenting it by the Maharaja.
Before introducing the resolution for P.S.C in the Council, it was discussed in the Unionist Party. There Sahodharan Ayyappan opposed this move with tooth and nail. It resulted in the resignation of a lot of members belonging to forward communities from the Unionist Party.131 Again, they wanted to make vengeance upon Sahodharan Ayyappan for his request to the Government in the issue of P.S.C, which prompted them to bring resolutions for the removal of him from the office of Deputy President. Those resolutions were supported by more than 20 members and hence got the permission to move. In this connection, P.Kumaran Ezhuthassan moved the following resolution: “This council do resolve that under section 19(3) of the Government of Cochin Act, XX of 1113, M.R.Ry. Rao Sahib Sahodharan Ayyappan Avl. B.A., the Deputy President of the Cochin Legislative Council, be removed from this office because of the most undemocratic statement made by him on the floor of the House on 12 February 1944 namely “I hope the Government will not be guided by the number of votes, mere number of votes, in this matter. That is my view in the matter. It is for the Government to decide in this matter. Any member has his own right to advise the Government and various unparliamentary ways indulged in by him while in the Chair”.132

Another resolution was also moved by M.Krishna Menon for the same demand.133 He blamed that Sahodharan Ayyappan was beating the communal drum in the legislature.134 At the same time, B.M.Peter alleged that those motions for the removal of Sahodharan Ayyappan from the office of Deputy President were moved by *savarnas* particularly Menons and Ayyars, and was the continuation of certain caste prejudices and quarrels originated in the Unionist Party.135

Sahodharan Ayyappan made a brief reply to the charges levelled against him. He said: “When in the Chair, I have been scrupulously impartial. I have never swayed discussion from the Chair. I might have elucidated certain points. Now, I will take the main charge that I made a most undemocratic statement. The statement that I made is most democratic.
Democracy is not bodily transplanted from one society to another. Democracy is evolved. In England and other countries, they have got a homogenous, unitary society. Here we have not got that. When the Child Marriage Restraint Bill came up for discussion here, I very vehemently appealed to the House not to use the strength of mere number of votes to tyrannise over the Brahmin minority. I still maintain that position. What was my statement? Government should not be guided by the mere number of votes. I did not say even as member for Kanayannur Ezhavas that the number had no weight at all. The number has got its weight. But in this particular matter where minority interests are involved, Government have to be careful in using their reserve power. Even almost unanimously passed resolutions are not accepted by the Government. Government have their own reasons. Here, Government do not accept or reject resolutions considering the mere number of votes. In the particular matter under discussion, Government will have to consider the communal implications of the votes. That is what I requested Government to do. It was the most democratic statement. I have no hatred towards any community. I am the least communal of all members here. I serve my country through my community too. I have cared more for the interests of the country than for those of my community. The present constitutional reform is based on my resolution. Adult franchise of the panchayats is the result of my resolution. The Civil Marriage Act has become law by my effort. I can cite so many other instances. I have moved very amicably with my friends of all communities and I have sacrificed all minor communal interests to work with them for the progress of the country.\textsuperscript{136}

Then the President of the Council, Sir George Boag, Diwan of Cochin, reminded the members that the Deputy President was elected by the whole House including the official members and that the official members were as such concerned as the non-official members to see that the business of the House was properly conducted by the Deputy President while he occupied the Chair. Secondly, the Diwan stated that to his knowledge, the Deputy President was not required on his election to that office to abandon his party allegiance or his
party principles. With reference to certain actions of the Deputy President, Diwan observed that there was nothing improper on the part of the Deputy President while he occupied the Chair. Finally, on the issue of the controversial speech of Sahodharan Ayyappan, President concluded that those remarks were capable of interpretations and whatever interpretation might be put upon those remarks, the fact still remained that they were not made from the chair, but they were made on the floor of the House and that the speech did not in any way reflect upon the conduct of Deputy President as a Deputy President. Under these circumstances, President declared that the official members of the Council would not support either of the resolutions that had been moved.

Under Section 19(3) of the Constitution Act of Cochin, the Deputy President might be removed by a resolution of the Council passed by a majority of the members then on the rolls of the House. In the ensued voting on the resolution of Kumaran Ezhuthssan, only 12 members voted for it. Hence, the President announced that less than half of the members then on the rolls of the Council had voted in favour of the resolution, it was not carried. Then the President suggested that the other resolution of M. Krishna Menon need not be put separately, which was accepted by the mover. Sahodharan Ayyappan remained in the position of the Deputy President till the dissolution of the Fifth Legislative Council on 23 March, 1945.

As a Minister

In the installation Durbar of Sri Kerala Varma as the Maharaja of Cochin on 21 March 1946, it was announced that a second minister would be appointed and a few more departments of government transferred to the administration of the representatives of the people. Nationalist party led by Parambi Lonappan, Minister for Rural Development, was the biggest group in the Legislative Council. Sahodharan Ayyappan was also a member of that party, elected from the special constituency of Cochin-Kanayannur Ezhavas. There was a heated discussion in the Nationalist party on the issue of proposing the name of second
Several members believed that the apt person for this office was Sahodharan Ayyappan. But certain other members made a powerful argument that persons elected from special constituencies would not be put up for ministership. This argument exercised a powerful influence in the decision of Parambi Lonappan to nominate K. Balakrishna Menon as Minister for Development, who accordingly assumed office on 15 May, 1946. This paved the way for the resignation of seven legislative members Sahodharan Ayyappan, P.K.Dewer, K.K.Kannan, K.Kochukuttan, K.S. Panicker, K.I.Velayudhan and K.T.Achuthan from the Nationalist party. Later, they formed the Socialist party.

The decision of the Cochin State Praja Mandal to observe 29 July 1946 as “Responsible Government Day” brought together the different groups in opposition and consequently they boycotted the Legislative Council meeting of the day. Later, they voted down the demands under ‘General Administration’ and passed motions of no confidence in the Council of Ministers. Under these circumstances, Parambi Lonappan and Balakrishna Menon resigned from office on 8 August, 1946 and their portfolios were entrusted to Sir.George Boag, the Dewan of Cochin. In order to overcome the constitutional deadlock, the Maharaja send a message to the Legislature on 17 August in which he expressed his willingness to transfer almost all departments of Government except law and order and finance to ministers responsible to the Legislature. This proposal made a division among the members of the Praja Mandalam. Finally, through voting, the party expressed its willingness to accept the proposal. In the meantime, T.K.Nair, leader of the progressive party and Sahodharan Ayyappan, leader of the Socialist Party, expressed their willingness to accept the leadership of the Praja Mandalam and join the proposed cabinet. As a result of this coalition, a new ministry comprising of Sahodharan Ayyappan, Panampilly Govinda Menon, C.R.Iyyunni and T.K.Nair assumed office on 9 September 1946. Sahodharan Ayyappan was put in charge of Public Works Department.
After becoming minister, Sahodharan Ayyappan tried to organize the Socialist Party. Through his writings, Sahodharan Ayyappan wanted to make the people conscious about the revolutionary socio-economic and political changes in U.S.S.R under the leadership of Lenin. In short, his writings and speeches on socialism instilled a new hope in the minds of the economically and socially backward people. Moreover, Sahodharan Ayyappan also continued his fight against casteism and related social evils. For instance, on the public meeting organized to celebrate the event of opening Kalur-Pavakkulam temples to all Hindus, Sahodharan Ayyappan made his presidential address in which he stressed the need for destroying caste. For this, he suggested that the efforts for social reforms might be quickened. At the same time, Sahodharan Ayyappan advised the people to observe non-violence in their bid to get temple entry. Sahodharan Ayyappan also hinted that if his ministership had no use to the people then he had no hesitation to get down from that office. 

The proclamation of the Cochin Maharaja on 14 August 1947, resulted in the resignation of C.P.Karunakara Menon, the Diwan, from office. Hence, the Maharaja abolished the office of Diwan and made suitable administrative changes. Accordingly, a new ministry comprising of Panampilly Govinda Menon (Prime minister), T.K. Nair (Minister for Home Affairs), C.R. Iyyunni (Minister for Food and Revenue) and Sahodharan Ayyappan (Minister for Public Works) assumed office on 1 September 1947. Unfortunately, the hesitation of the Maharaja to make an enquiry into the police excesses at the Rajendra Maidan, Ernakulam, on 18 October, resulted in the resignation of this ministry. Later, Sahodharan Ayyappan decided to join Prajamandalam. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan issued a statement in which he explained that the strengthening of the Socialist Party at grass root level was a gigantic task. So also, in his opinion, it was useless to organize the people with similar interests under several banners. Hence Sahodharan Ayyappan decided to join Prajamandalam along with their followers. In this connection,
Sahodharan Ayyappan also made it clear that this decision was taken in the best interests of the community and the public.\textsuperscript{145} 

In the elections held on 8 and 11 September 1948, on the basis of adult franchise, the Prajamandalam got a clear majority and won 43 seats in the Cochin Legislative Council. Hence, the ministry comprising of E. Ikkanda Warriar (Prime Minister), Parampilly Govinda Menon (Minister for finance and law), Sahodharan Ayyappan (Minister for works and revenue) assumed office on 20 September. When this ministry was in office, the integration of the two princely states materialized on the 1 July, 1949. It brought about reorganization of the cabinet and state legislative assembly. Accordingly, the cabined ministers of Travancore and Cochin were sworn as ministers of the United State of Travancore – Cochin under the Chief ministership of T.K. Narayana Pillai on 1 July, 1949. Naturally, Sahodharan Ayyappan was also a minister in this cabinet. He was put in charges of Harijan uplift and protection of backward communities, Joint stock companies, Trade Marks and patents, Local bodies (Municipalities etc.), rural uplift including Panchayats, Registration and anchal. Sahodharan Ayyappan was highly interested in the social progress of Harijans. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan, Minister for Harijan uplift and protection of backward communities, declared that the policy of the Government was to admit Harijan students in hostels meant for all.\textsuperscript{146}

During the general discussion on the budget in the United State of Travancore and Cochin Legislative Assembly, Smt. Annie Joseph made a powerful speech against the big size of the cabinet. She demanded for reducing the number of ministers, govt. employees and abolition of the post of Deputy President for the interests of the poor people\textsuperscript{147}. There was even criticism from Pattom Thanu Pillai, the former Chief Minister of Travancore, against the nine member ministry of the United State of Travancore – Cochin.\textsuperscript{148} By this time, the administrative expenses of the United State of Travancore-Cochin Government reached
nearly Rs.7 Crores out of an annual income of Rs.8 ½ Crores. Hence, it was natural to demand for a cut in administrative expenses, including the abolition of sinecure posts. Sahodharan Ayyappan considered that this was the right time to keep his words. Moreover, he was already a strong advocate for reducing administrative expenses. At the same time, he requested that the govt. should not dismiss any government servant in the name of reduction of administrative expenses because it would make a lot of problem to the families concerned. Under these circumstances, Sahodharan Ayyappan resigned from the cabinet. Several persons, including Chief Minister T.K. Narayana Pillai, tried to persuade Sahodharan Ayyappan to withdraw his resignation. But Sahodharan Ayyappan stood firm in his decision. It was followed by the resignation of Ikkanda Warriar, Sahib Bahadur T.A. Abdulla and Miss. Annie Mascarene from the cabinet. The Raj Pramukh of the United State of Travancore-Cochin accepted the resignations of these council of ministers with effect from the 3 January, 1950. On the 8 of January, Raj Pramukh had ordered for a redistribution of portfolios among the remaining ministers, viz, T.K.Narayana Pillai (Chief Minister), A.J. John (Minister for Finance and Revenue), Panampilly Govinda Menon (Minister for Education, Labour and Civil Supplies), E.John Philippose (Minister for Public Works, Communications and Agriculture) and N. Kunjuraman (Minister for Industries, Excise and Local Self Govt.). In this connection, the departments handled by the resigned ministers were also distributed among the ministers.

Sahodharan Ayyappan had several outstanding qualities necessary for an ideal legislator. For instance, he was an efficient parliamentarian, an advocate for the cause of backward classes, a good journalist, a free thinker, leader of a big community and a poet. But in the beginning, he was neglected in the selection of ministership. Hence, the Ezhavas believed that, this neglect was mainly on communal grounds. However, when he became
the minister of Cochin (9 September 1946), it generated a great feeling of joy among the Ezhavas.

Even though Sahodharan Ayyappan disagreed with the political ideology of Mahatma Gandhi, in personal life, he simply followed the Gandhian principles. 152 Sahodharan Ayyappan never liked the splendour and luxury of the ministers. Even after becoming minister, Sahodharan Ayyappan led a simple life like an ordinary man. 153 In this connection C.Narayana Pillai says: “During his ministership I made a visit to his official residence after 6 p.m. When I knocked at the door, it was opened by Ayyappan. Then I looked around in search of a peon, but there was none. Noticing my surprise, Ayyappan said that he will permit them to go to their homes at 6 p.m. Ayyappan also opined that being a common man, he never likes the posh life of a minister with the accompaniment of guards, daffedars, peons, etc., at home.” 154

During his ministership, once his car developed some trouble near Vaikam on a trip from Trivandrum to Ernakulam. Then he continued his journey in a private transport bus which was very much crowded. When people understood Sahodharan Ayyappan, they offered a seat to him. Then one person asked him respectfully, “Why you have decided to travel in this bus?” Sahodharan Ayyappan replied with a smile: “I also ask the same question to you. Buses are intended for human beings to travel, in this case, I have no specialty.” 155

This was the nature of Sahodharan Ayyappan as a minister.

Sahodharan Ayyappan strongly believed that the minister, who was, to a large extent, indebted to his political party for the position, should act above party considerations, in the interests of the country. In this connection, Sahodharan Ayyappan behaved in an ideal manner when he was in the position of Minister. For instance, when Sahodharan Ayyappan was the Minister for Works, one of the leaders of the Prajamandalam (the party to which Sahodharan Ayyappan belonged) hinted that he should also utilize the ministership for the
benefits of the party. Then Sahodharan Ayyappan replied: “Mr., I am sorry to say that you don’t know Sahodharan Ayyappan. This much I have to say”.

On the other hand, Sahodharan Ayyappan believed that the aim of an ideal government was to give justice to all people, irrespective of party considerations.

In words and actions, he hated artificiality. As minister, he discouraged recommendations. But genuine grievances of the people, even without recommendations, were rectified without any delay. If friends and relatives approached with recommendations, he usually cross examined and put them on the defensive. In that trial, Sahodharan Ayyappan understood the nature of their problem and if it was found justifiable, he would do the needful and otherwise rejected it. This attitude of Sahodharan Ayyappan earned several enemies for the time being. But in the long run, all those ill feelings were over, when they clearly understood Sahodharan Ayyappan.

Sahodharan Ayyappan was highly impartial and justifiable in passing orders, in that, he was never with any community or party. Unfortunately, there were many people among the forward communities who had an opposite view. But this impression was meaningless and during the integration of Travancore – Cochin, then the Chief Secretary K.G. Menon observed: “I have heard that Sahodharan Ayyappan was highly communal. But the files handled by him tells a different view. His orders are so impartial and justifiable”.

Sahodharan Ayyappan took time to pass orders on controversial issues. He had intimated the private secretary to study the files in details, to prepare a note and then read it to him. During reading, Sahodharan Ayyappan would ask questions and the private secretary had to answer. After that, Sahodharan Ayyappan would pass orders. This system was followed by him mainly due to his eye disease and headache.

Generally, Sahodharan Ayyappan passed orders on the day itself on the files put up. Hence, with the assistance of private secretary, he used to see the files up to 10 p.m. Once
after midnight Sahodharan Ayyappan asked him about the details of an order passed in a file on the same day and convinced himself that it was right. This clearly indicated that he had the habit of recollecting and judging his orders before sleep.

During his ministership, there were complaints regarding the mismanagement in the working of the Peringalkuthu Hydro-Electric Project. It was alleged that by influencing Sahodharan Ayyappan the Works Minister, some people related with him had earned profit and accepted bribes. The Government of Cochin appointed Rao Bahadur U. Ananda Rao, Superintending Engineer of Government of Madras, to make an investigation on that issue. He submitted the report on 24 February 1948. This report revealed that the allegations were baseless and it was accepted by the Government.

Sahodharan Ayyappan as Minister for works made tremendous contribution to the progress of the former Cochin state. The construction of M.G. Road at Ernakulam was an important one in that respect. For widening this road, the Govt. had to acquire the private properties of many people. Sahodharan Ayyappan had a small plot of land and building near Pallimukku, Ernakulam. Govt. had to acquire a portion of this land and house for the construction of M.G. Road. If Sahodharan Ayyappan had directed the persons in charge of the construction, they would have deviated from the original plan and avoided his house. But Sahodharan Ayyappan stood firm against such exemptions and hence the front portion of the Sahodhara Bhavan was eaten away by the new road. Now, this building stands as a monument of his selfless actions as minister.

Sahodharan Ayyappan also made a plan to connect Ernakulam, Mulavukad, Panampukad and Vaipin areas through three bridges. The initial works were already done. But after the resignation Sahodharan Ayyappan from the ministry of Travancore-Cochin, the works also came to a stand still. He was also responsible for the construction of Vaipin-Munampam road. Before the construction of this road, the people of that coastal area had to
spend many hours in the boats running between Ernakulam – Kottappuram. Sahodharan Ayyappan was responsible for accelerating the works in connection with the construction of Peringalkuthu Hydro – Electric Project. He also took interest in planning the Foreshore road at Ernakulam. Moreover, he ordered for the construction of several roads in the rural areas. Among them, there were parallel roads constructed near the roads used by the savarnas.\textsuperscript{164}

Sahodharan Ayyappan also used his ministership for the progress of the Dalits. In this connection, K.K. Madhavan, leader of the Harijans in Cochin, wrote: “When Sahodharan Ayyappan was in the office of Minister, he persuaded the Maharaja to accept the principle of appointing Pulayas and Depressed Classes to the posts of Magistrates, Tahsildars, Police Inspectors and Revenue Inspectors. Also Sahodharan Ayyappan and Prajamandalam party were responsible for passing a law by which licenses were refused to those hotels, teashops and barbershops which did not permit the entry of all people, irrespective of caste. Moreover, they prohibited eviction until the new scheme for providing houses to all people came into existence”.\textsuperscript{165}

In general, Sahodharan Ayyappan used his ministership for the service of people with utmost justice. He never did anything for the sake of publicity. In short, he shouldered responsibilities and faced problems boldly in the path of justice and advanced further with simplicity.

**Resignation from the Legislature**

The unification of Travancore and Cochin injected a new apple of discord into the already faction-ridden Congress Party, and parochialism and regionalism began to dominate it.\textsuperscript{166} The underlying cause of much more intensive factional struggle was the elevation of T.K. Narayana Pillai to the presidentship of the Congress party of the Unified State. The election had a profound effect upon the formation of the new cabinet, which became dominated by a group from Travancore, and injected the traditional rivalry between the
Congress groups from Travancore and Cochin into the Government structure. The regional and parochial aspirations asserted themselves so powerfully on the very day of the formation of the Cabinet, 1 July, 1949, that the Chief Minister had to accommodate the rival groups by enlarging his cabinet and accepting into it N. Kunjuraman, E.J. Philippose and Miss Annie Mascarene. On the other hand, E.K. Madhavan was forced to resign from it.\textsuperscript{167}

The adjustment in the balance of regional forces operating within the congress was not a lasting achievement. In due course, a struggle for the control of the party and cabinet, between the Travancore and the Cochin groups, began. It reached a critical point and hence the cabinet resigned on 24 February 1951.\textsuperscript{168} Following it, C.Kesavan was elected as leader of the Congress party and appointed by the Raj Pramukh as the Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin, who took oath of office on 3\textsuperscript{rd} March.\textsuperscript{169} He thought that by reducing the number of cabinet seats, he could eliminate the factional strife which had proved so deadly to the stability of the congress rule in the state. Hence, his cabinet consisted only of three members - himself, T.K. Narayana Pillai and A.J. John. But C. Kesavan was wrong in hoping that he could stabilize his cabinet by denying representation to the Cochin group. This group was much embittered and, under the leadership of Panampally Govinda Menon, threatened to resign from the Assembly in order to defeat the Government, if some of its members were not taken into the cabinet. Also, the Cochin group demanded for the voluntary resignation of T.K. Narayana Pillai and A.J. John from the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{170} C. Kesavan, the Chief Minister, refused to accept the demand of the Cochin group and resigned from the leadership of the Congress in protest against their pressure politics.

During that period, a joint meeting of the Cochin District Congress Committee and members of the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly from the Cochin area was convened at Trichur. In that meeting, it was decided that they should resign their membership in the Legislative Assembly as a mark of strong protest.\textsuperscript{171} Accordingly, 30 members, viz,

The inability of the Congress to provide the people of Kerala with a stable Government in spite of its large parliamentary majority had such a bad effect upon the public that the party realized that it could no longer afford the internal dissent. This prompted the warring groups to restore unity, to some degree, by re-electing C. Kesavan to the leadership of the Congress Party. C. Kesavan then agreed to accommodate the Cochin group by enlarging his cabinet. Sahodharan Ayyappan wanted to include P.K. Dewer in that cabinet. But the new cabinet of C. Kesavan, formed on 6 September 1951, comprised of K.M. Korah, G. Chandrasekshara Pillai, L.M. Pylee and P.K. Krishnankutty Menon. Among them, L.M. Pylee and P.K. Krishnankutty Menon represented the Cochin Group. The neglect of Sahodharan Ayyappan’s suggestion to include Dewer in the Cabinet pained him and hence he decided to withdraw from the activities of the Congress. Later Sahodharan Ayyappan hesitated to renew his membership in the Congress Party. With that, he retired from the Congress Party and active politics till his death on 6 March 1968.
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